

Message Text

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70

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 INT-08 SCEM-02 GAC-01 L-03 AID-20 EB-11

NSC-10 RSC-01 CIEP-02 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-08 OMB-01

CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 LAB-06 SIL-01 RSR-01 /149 W

----- 123424

R 212003 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1349

INFO AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

AMCONSUL BELFAST

AMCONSUL LIVERPOOL

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FOR STATE/ COMMERCE

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ENRG, US, UK

SUBJECT: NORTH SEA OIL: U. K. REPLY TO U. S. NOTE

REGARDING PURCHASES OF EQUIPMENT BY OFFSHORE
OIL INDUSTRY

REF: (A) LONDON 5913, (B) LONDON 2865, (C) LONDON 3054,
(D) LONDON 3120, (E) STATE 21753, (F) LONDON 2723

1. WE RECEIVED REPLY TO EMBASSY' S NOTE REGARDING
PROCUREMENT OF SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT BY OFFSHORE OIL
INDUSTRY OF MARCH 9 (REF B) FROM GEORGE WHITEHEAD,
ASSISTANT UNDER SECRETARY, FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH
OFFICE, MAY 18. TEXT TRANSMITTED REF A.

2. WHITEHEAD MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

(A) HE APOLOGIZED FOR LENGTH OF TIME IT HAS TAKEN HMG
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TO REPLY TO US NOTE. SAID PRINCIPAL CAUSE OF DELAY
WAS NECESSITY TO CLEAR TEXT WITH LARGE NUMBER OF OFFICES
IN FCO AND DTI.

(B) WHITEHEAD SAID HE THOUGHT REPLY WAS SELF- EXPLANATORY
AND EMPHASIZED BRITISH DESIRE ALLOW ALL FIRMS FULL AND
FAIR OPPORTUNITY TO COMPETE. WE NOTED THAT " FULL AND
FAIR OPPORTUNITY" WAS NOT DEFINED IN HMG REPLY AND ASKED
IF IT MIGHT NOT BE DETERMINED BY ABILITY OF SUPPLIER TO
MEET PRICE, QUALITY AND DELIVERY TERMS OF PURCHASER.
WHITEHEAD AGREED THAT THESE WERE THE THREE PRINCIPAL
CRITERIA.

(C) WHITEHEAD ALSO NOTED THAT AT VARIOUS TIMES HE HAD
BEEN ASKED IF ANY DISTINCTION WAS INTENDED BETWEEN FIRMS
WHOSE BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP WAS BRITISH AND THOSE WHICH
WERE BASED IN THE UK AND DID MOST OF THEIR BUSINESS IN
THE UK, BUT WERE OWNED BY NON- BRITISH FIRM. HE SAID
HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS POINT WITH DTI OFFICIALS WHO HAD
REPLIED THAT THERE WOULD BE NO DISCRIMINATION AMONG
FIRMS BASED IN BRITAIN ON A BASIS OF OWNERSHIP AND THAT
FIRMS WITH " EXTENSIVE MANUFACTURING, ETC." FACILITIES
IN THE UK WOULD BE CONSIDERED BRITISH WHATEVER THEIR
OWNERSHIP. WHITEHEAD SAID HE HAD ASKED WHAT MIGHT BE
INCLUDED UNDER " ETC." AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT IF THE
FIRM WAS BRITISH BASED AND HAD A SUBSTANTIAL BRITISH
STAFF, IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED BRITISH. FOR INSTANCE,
ENGINEERING FIRMS INVOLVED IN OFFSHORE OIL INDUSTRY
MIGHT BE CONSIDERED BRITISH PROVIDED THEY WERE BASED
HERE AND HAD A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF BRITISH EMPLOYEES.
HOWEVER, HE SAID, IN ORDER TO MAKE CLEAR HOW MUCH
BUSINESS WAS BEING GIVEN TO BRITISH OWNED FIRMS, THE
QUESTIONNAIRE MIGHT BE AMENDED TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN
ORDERS PLACED WITH BRITISH OWNED UK FIRMS AND THOSE
PLACED WITH OTHER UK FIRMS.
ANNENBERG

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